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ABSTRACT

This monograph is designed for New York parents and school personnel charged with administering the screening instruments for incoming kindergarten students to determine possible giftedness. It begins by explaining Article 65 of New York's Compulsory Education and School Census Law, Section 3208, which requires that parents be notified if their child is found to be possibly gifted through kindergarten screening. It suggests that school districts use multiple instruments and criteria to assist in this determination and urges that the following be considered as part of the identification procedure: (1) individual IQ tests should be given; (2) information from parents should be included in the screening process; (3) class lessons should be designed to elicit the demonstration of gifted characteristics; and (4) portfolios should be used to enhance the process and provide authentic assessment of ability. Appendices include sections of the education law related to the screening of students with disabilities and giftedness, the Advocacy for Gifted and Talented Education in New York State (AGATE) legislative platform, suggested modification to screening instruments, a parent inventory for incoming kindergartners, and a list of characteristics of the gifted child. (An annotated bibliography contains 12 references.) (CR)

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Suggestions for Screening Entering Kindergarten Students to Assist in the Identification of Possibly Gifted Children

Starr Cline, Ed.D.

Introduction

Because of the complexity of the issues involved in screening for potential giftedness in young children, this monograph includes a collection of ideas incorporating some of the best practices being developed nationwide. Article 65 of New York's Compulsory Education and School Census Law, Section 3208, requires that parents be notified if their child is found to be possibly gifted as a result of kindergarten screening. AGATE produced this monograph for both parents and school personnel charged with administering the screening instruments for incoming kindergarten students to determine possible giftedness.

AGATE is a volunteer advocacy organization whose members are professionals in the field and parents of gifted children throughout the State of New York. We welcome individuals' and school districts' help in improving the quality of screening procedures.

Article 65: Compulsory Education and School Census, Section 3208

Effective April 12, 1993, the superintendent and parents must be notified if a child has been screened and found to be "possibly gifted." **Parents are to be notified by December of the kindergarten year** if their child is possibly gifted. Such notification should not be construed as an entitlement to services. A copy of the law is attached (Appendix A).

It is AGATE's hope that with the *Compact for Learning*, individual school districts will provide flexible programming to meet the needs of ALL students. A copy of AGATE's platform is attached (Appendix B).

Because of some of the challenges involved in identifying young gifted children, AGATE suggests that school districts use multiple instruments and criteria to assist in this determination. AGATE also supports the efforts being made to ensure that children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with physical challenges or learning disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students not be missed.

AGATE believes that the following should be considered as part of the identification procedure:

1. Individual IQ tests, if used, should continue to be a part of the assessment process. Screening instruments already in place to assist in the identification of children with deficits should be given in the child's native language, and should be modified so that

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cognitive precocity can be noted. Suggestions as to how this modification can take lace are attached. (Appendix C).

2. Information from parents should be included in the screening process. A parent information form developed by the SAGE parent affiliate of AGATE has been included. (Appendix D).
3. Characteristics of the gifted have been included in Appendix E. It is suggested that class lessons be designed to elicit the demonstration of these characteristics (Cline, 1984).
4. Portfolios should be used to enhance the process and provide authentic assessment of ability. Journal articles which describe the process involved in the development of portfolios are listed in the annotated bibliography (Coleman, 1997; Wright & Borland, 1993).

Appendices:

A. Sections of Education Law Related to the Screening of Pupils for Handicapping Conditions and Giftedness (as amended by Chapter 28 of the Laws of 1993; effective April 12, 1993).
B. AGATE Legislative Platform
C. Modifications to Screening Instruments
D. Parent Inventory of Incoming Kindergartners (with interpretation guidelines and tally sheet)
E. Characteristics of the Gifted Child
F. Annotated Bibliography

Appendix A. Sections of Education Law Related to the Screening of Pupils for Handicapping Conditions and Giftedness (as amended by Chapter 28 of the Laws of 1993; effective 4/12/93)

Article 65 – Compulsory Education and School Census
Section 3208. Attendance; proper mental and physical condition

5.a. Each board of education or trustees of each school district shall provide for the screening of every new entrant to school to determine which pupils are or may be children with handicapping conditions or gifted, as well as all pupils who score below level two on either the third grade reading or mathematics tests for New York state elementary schools and all students who obtain a comparable percentile score on the regents preliminary competency test, in accordance with regulations of the commissioner to determine whether such pupils may have handicapping conditions.

5.b Such screening shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) A physical examination pursuant to the provisions of sections 901, 903, and 904 of this chapter, including proof of immunization as required by section 2164 of the public health law.

(2) A language development assessment.

5.c. If such screening indicates a suspected handicapping condition, which may require the provision of special education services or program, a referral shall be made to the committee of special education.

5.d. If such screening indicates a possibly gifted child, the name and finding shall be reported to the superintendent of schools of such district and to the parent or legal guardian of such child. Such notification shall not be construed as an entitlement for services for any such child identified as possibly gifted.

Appendix B. AGATE Legislative Platform

Vision Statement: AGATE seeks and supports legislation to require appropriate challenging and enriched curricula for every student, based on ability and not solely on chronological age. We support the use of strategies such as differentiated instructional programs, ensuring optimal match between student ability and curriculum from kindergarten through grade twelve.

1. AGATE recommends that State aid specifically allocated for gifted education be continued and enhanced. Further, these funds shall only be used for instructional services to gifted children. We support grants and incentives to districts developing model programs, along with the support for the continuum of services necessary to achieve excellence in education.

2. AGATE recommends that as a part of the formal certification program, teachers have a minimum of six (6) credit hours in education of the gifted. These credits should be provided by accredited institutions of higher education. This would ensure that all teachers would be better prepared to address the needs of gifted students from every background, and in a variety of talent domains.

3. AGATE recommends that every school district be required to include staff development focused on identification and instruction of the gifted. Leadership, materials, and methods should be made available through the State Education Department, BOCES curriculum coordinators, Teacher Centers, and institutions of higher education.

4. AGATE recommends the appointment of a State Director for Gifted Education to coordinate statewide delivery of instructional services, professional development, research and development.

Appendix C. Modifications to Screening Instruments

Because of the demands of Special Education Legislation, a careful screening takes place to determine possible deficits. A survey of school districts in the Long Island area, for example, reveals that screening takes place for physical, psychomotor, spatial, and cognitive deficits. AGATE suggests that districts raise the ceiling of sections of the screening instruments to assure the inclusion of learners with advanced abilities. Some examples might include one or more of the following:

1. Ability to count beyond 20.
2. Ability to add.
3. Ability to sequence pictures into a logical story.
4. Ability to read.
5. Evidence of exceptional artistic ability.
6. Ability to see cause and effect relationships.
7. Ability to solve problems relating to real life situation.

The tester should proceed and provide sufficient advanced material to determine the child has reached his or her upper limit on the measure.

Appendix D. Parent Inventory of Incoming Kindergartners

As parents, you know your child better than anyone. The following questions are designed to help us get to know your child. Please take time to share all information that you believe will help us in planning his/her education.

Circle yes or no and/or check all that apply:

1. My child:
   - recognizes some numbers _____
   - can count to 10 _____
   - can count to 20 _____
   - can count higher than 20 _____
2. My child understands "How many …?" yes / no
3. My child can:
   - add _____
   - subtract _____
4. My child is familiar with the alphabet. yes / no
5. S/he can recognize capital letters. yes / no
6. S/he can recognize lower case letters? yes / no
7. My child knows the beginning sounds of letters. yes / no
8. My child rides a:
   - tricycle _____
   - bicycle with training wheels _____
   - bicycle _____
   - does not ride a bike _____
9. My child can tie his/her shoes. yes / no
10. How do I think my child feels about entering school? _____

_____

_____

11. Do I anticipate any problems? yes / no

    If yes, what are they? _____

_____

_____

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12. On average, how many hours per day does my child watch television/videos? _____ hours

13. What are his/her favorite television shows and/or videos? _____

_____

14. My child has a history of many ear infections. yes / no

15. My child began walking when s/he was _____ (approximate age).

16. My child spoke in complete sentences when s/he was _____ (approximate age.)

17. Did my child demonstrate any early signs of alertness? What were they? _____

_____

_____

18. These are examples that describe my child's attention span. _____

_____

_____

19. This is something that my child remembered or memorized that made an impression on me.

_____

_____

20. My child has: an average vocabulary _____
an unusually extensive vocabulary _____

21. These are three things I consider memorable, incredible, or just plain terrific that my child has done since s/he was born.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

22. My child likes to: invent imaginary companions _____
make up stories _____
dance _____
draw pictures _____
sing _____
be read to _____
other _____

23. My child solves problems on his/her own. yes / no

24. My child is beginning to read. yes / no

25. (If my child is reading) Give examples of books s/he can read:

_____

_____

26. When I read to my child, s/he:
- listens attentively _____
- asks lots of questions _____
- fidgets a little _____
- will not sit and listen _____

27. My child:
- likes all stories _____
- has a few favorites s/he wants to hear over and over _____

28. My child has difficulty writing. yes / no

29. My child likes to play with:
- building toys _____
- Legos _____
- small figures _____
- dolls _____
- crayons/paints/playdough _____
- riding toys / bikes _____
- video games _____
- tag, running games _____
- house _____
- listen to tapes / records _____
- baseball, football, etc. _____
- water _____
- other _____

30. My child spends most of his/her time _____

_____

_____

31. Does my child have any time-consuming hobbies or collections? yes / no

They are _____

_____

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32. I would describe my child as _____

_____

_____

33. My child appears to be very sensitive to the following:

loud noises	_____
certain clothing, textures	_____
animals	_____
dust, pollen, certain foods (e.g. milk, sugar, preservatives)	_____
feelings of others	_____
his/her own feelings (cries easily or is frustrated easily)	_____
adult issues of justice, fairness or morality	_____

34. My child is most comfortable with:

younger playmates	_____
same age playmates	_____
older playmates	_____
adults	_____

Please explain if needed: _____

_____

_____

35. My child is a perfectionist, always wants to be "best" in everything. yes / no

36. My child has a excellent sense of humor. yes / no

37. Please share any other information about your child that you feel would be helpful. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Key to interpreting the parent inventory: This key is provided as a guide for those persons interpreting answers to the *Parent Inventory of Incoming Kindergartners.* Score sheet on p. 9.

Section 1. General Background	
1-7	These are general questions to find out what skills the child has mastered. It is expected that potentially gifted children will have mastered most if not all of these skills prior to entering kindergarten.
8-9	These general developmental questions are not specifically related to giftedness.
10	Included to give some insight into how the child feels about going to school.
11	From parents of potentially gifted children, one should look for awareness of social-emotional intensity and perhaps the anticipation that the child will not be challenged.
12	This question is asked for informational purposes only. It is not specifically related to giftedness.
13	This question is asked to give insight into the child's interests; these interests may be related to the types of hobbies or other activities that appear later in the questionnaire.
Section 2. Medical	
14	Chronic ear infections in the first three years of life can depress school performance. This information can explain discrepancies between parents' reports and child's performance.
Section 3. Early Signs	
15-16	Precocious development in such areas as walking and talking is an early sign of giftedness.
17-20	Some of the earliest signs of giftedness include alertness, long attention span, excellent memory, and advanced vocabulary.
21	This is the place where you should expect parents of gifted children to describe unusually early development in such areas as speech, reading, alertness, attention span, memory, vocabulary, curiosity, and attention to detail.
Section 4. Imagination / Creativity	
22	This question asks about some of the child's means of creative expression.
Section 5. Academic Skills / Areas of Interest	
23-27	Good problem solving skills, early and avid reading ability, long attention span, interest in books, attentive listening, and asking lots of questions are characteristics of the gifted.
28	In some cases, gifted children have difficulties with writing, especially with poor handwriting.
29	This item is designed to learn more about all children. In the case of gifted children, look for a wide range of interests, particularly in Legos and puzzles.
30-31	Expect answers from parents of gifted children to mention a variety of interests, time-consuming hobbies or collections, and/or preference for laying or reading alone.
Section 6. Personality Traits	
32	Look for descriptions that use words such as bright, rapid learner, creative, leader, emotional, sensitive, perfectionist, humorous, mature for age.
33	Sensitivity is a characteristic frequently related to giftedness, particularly feelings associated with issues of morality and justice.
34	Gifted children often prefer older playmates and adults.
35	Perfectionism is a personality trait strongly associated with giftedness. Although perfectionism is often seen as a behavior that must be corrected, with guidance it can be part of what motivates an individual to strive for excellence.
36	Sense of humor is a personality trait often associated with gifted children.
37	This question is included as a place for a parent to share information that has not been addressed in previous questions.

Fold this sheet to line up with parent form. Check box where provided if parent's form includes yes or check at that item, or an appropriate anecdotal reference. When completed, attach to parent form, to make anecdotal record readily available!

1. some numbers ☐
   count to 10 ☐
   count to 20 ☐
   count > 20 ☐
2. "How many …?" ☐
3. add ☐
   subtract ☐
4. alphabet ☐
5. capital letters ☐
6. lower case letters ☐
7. beginning sounds ☐
8. *tricycle*
   bicycle/wheels
   bicycle
   does not ride
9. *tie shoes*
10. *Anecdotal / feelings re:*

    school entry

11. *Anecdotal / anticipate prob.*

    soc/emot'l intens. ☐

    not challenged ☐

12. *TV hours*
13. *Anecdotal / shows*
14. ear infections ☐
15. walk < age [___] ☐
16. sent. < age [___] ☐
17. early alertness ☐

    Anecdotal / alertness

18. long atten. span ☐

    Anecdotal / attention span

19. rememb./memor. ☐

    Anecdotal / remembered

    or memorized

20. ave. vocab.
    extensive vocab ☐
21. *Anecdotal / memorable*

22. imag. companions ☐
    stories ☐
    dance ☐
    draw pictures ☐
    sing ☐
    be read to ☐
    other ☐

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23. solve indep. ☐

24. read ☐

25. *Anecdotal /*

book titles

26. attentive ☐
many questions ☐
fidgets a little
will not listen

27. all stories ☐

favorites ☐

28. difficulty writing ☐

29. building toys ☐
Legos ☐
small figures ☐
dolls ☐
cray/paints/play ☐
riding toys/bikes ☐
video games ☐
tag / running ☐
house ☐
tapes/records ☐
baseball, football ☐
water ☐

other ☐

30. *Anecdotal /*

activities

31. hobbies/collect. ☐
Anecdotal / hobbies/collections

32. *Anecdotal /*

describe child

33. sensitive to:
loud noises ☐
clothing, textures ☐
animals ☐
dust/pollen/foods
☐
feelings of others ☐
own feelings
☐
adult issues ☐

34. younger playm. ☐
same age playm. ☐
older playmates ☐
adults ☐
Anecdotal / explain

35. perfectionist ☐

36. sense of humor ☐

37. *Anecdotal*

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Appendix F. Annotated Bibliography

Baldwin, A. (1994). The Seven Plus story: Developing hidden talent among students in socioeconomically disadvantaged environments. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 38* (2).

This article summarizes the results of the Javits 7+ Gifted and Talented Program based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory. "This program was designed to help those students who had potential to overcome some hurdles inherent in their academic and societal experiences. Unfortunately, some students who were selected using this innovative approach were not able to continue in a program for the gifted due to inadequate test scores."

Callahan, C., Tomlinson, C., and Pizzat, P. *Contexts for promise: Noteworthy practices and innovations in the identification of gifted students.* National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia, Ruffner Hall, 405 Emmet Street, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

The monograph contains 11 different identification models that evolved from specific needs, philosophies, or contexts. The models are presented as guides to the design of appropriate identification procedures.

Cline, S. (1994). *Teaching for talent.* Buffalo, NY: D.O.K.

The author describes characteristics of the gifted and includes sample lessons designed to identify specific talents and abilities in the classroom. A matrix is included so that behaviors can be noted and a profile established.

Coleman, L. (1994). Portfolio assessment: A key to identifying hidden talents and empowering teachers of young children. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 38*(2).

This project used portfolio assessment as a means of identifying and developing instructional plans for children in kindergarten to third grade. The project was guided by the belief that gifted behavior is universal. Eighteen primary identifiers of exceptional potential are listed, then collapsed into four categories.

Hirsch, E.S. (1984). *The block book.* Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The author describes different stages of block building including how high ability students use blocks in ways that demonstrated advanced cognitive development.

Karnes, M.B. (Ed.) (1983). *The underserved: Our young gifted children.* Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Over the years numerous books and articles have been written on how to identify and educate older children who demonstrate giftedness. There is, however, a paucity of educational literature on the young gifted/talented child. The purpose of this publication is to: (a) emphasize the need for early identification of the gifted; (b) foster a commitment to early educational programming for gifted/talented children; and (c) review research, expert opinion and current practices that may enable educators to launch exemplary programs for young gifted children.

Louis, B., Feiring, C., & Lewis, M. (1992). *Identifying gifted preschoolers* (Video and Teacher's Manual). Institute for the Study of Child Development, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

This manual and video illustrate how spatial, verbal, and problem-solving abilities can be noted in young children. In each of the settings three- and five-year-old children are observed. The materials describe and illustrate how the performance of gifted children compares with typical performance for that age.

Roedell, W.C., Jackson, N.E., and Robinson, H.B. (1980). *Gifted young children*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gifted Young Children reviews the literature and synthesizes most of what is known about the intellectual abilities and social development of gifted preschool and primary grade children. The nature of giftedness and the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of such young children are explored. Processes and problems of identifying gifted youngsters through their performances on standard tests and from information provided by parents and teachers are examined and illustrated in considerable detail. Basic principles in planning programs for gifted young children are presented as are descriptions of actual on-going problems, evaluation procedures, and a discussion of the pros and cons of early entrance to regular school.

Rubin, J., & Rubenfeld, J. Project Directors Community School District 18, 755 East 100th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11236. Javits 7+ Gifted and Talented Program, Kindergarten Assessment Model 1992-3.

The assessment model used in the Javits 7+ program is described. Each of the activities assists in the identification of abilities based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory.

Silverman, L. (Ed.) (1986). Special issue - The IQ controversy. *Roeper Review 8*, (3).

This issue discusses different conceptions of giftedness. Evidence for use and misuse of IQ testing is presented, as well as alternatives to traditional testing.

Sternberg, J. *AGATE monograph: Identification of primary gifted students.*

The author describes activities which can be used to identify student with special abilities at the primary level.

Williams, L.R. & DeGaetano, Y. (1993). Using early childhood developmental portfolios in the identification and education of young, economically disadvantaged, potentially gifted students. *Roeper Review.*

The article presents a rationale for and describes the format used in the development of portfolios for young, potentially gifted students. The portfolios were designed to document growth in specific domains.

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